

**REMARKS**

In the Final Office Action<sup>1</sup>, the Examiner took the following actions:

- 1) rejected claims 1, 4-11, 16, 26, 27, 41, 44-51, 56, 66, 67, 86, and 90 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,798,753 to Doganata ("*Doganata*") in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0053612 to Henrickson et al. ("*Henrickson*");
- 2) rejected claims 12-15, 22-25, 33-37, 52-55, 62-65, 73-77, 82, 83, and 87 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Doganata* and *Henrickson* in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,801,610 to Malik ("*Malik*");
- 3) rejected claims 17 and 57 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Doganata* and *Henrickson* in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,540,850 to Herr et al. ("*Herr*");
- 4) rejected claims 18-21 and 58-61 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Dognata* and *Henrickson* in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,697,796 to Kermani ("*Kermani*");
- 5) rejected claims 28-32 and 68-72 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Doganata* and *Henrickson* in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,163,692 to Chakrabarti et al. ("*Chakrabarti*");
- 6) rejected claims 38, 40, 78, 80, 81, 85 and 89 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Doganata*, *Henrickson*, and *Malik* in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,638,434 to Gottlieb et al. ("*Gottlieb*"); and

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<sup>1</sup> The Office Action contains a number of statements reflecting characterizations of the related art and the claims. Regardless of whether any such statement is identified herein, Applicant declines to automatically subscribe to any statement or characterization in the Office Action.

7) rejected claims 39, 79, and 84 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Doganata, Henrickson, Malik, and Gottlieb* in further view of *Chakrabarti*.

By this amendment, Applicants propose to amend claims 1, 4, 9-13, 15, 16, 22, 28, 30, 32, 33, 38-41, 44, 49-53, 55, 56, 62, 68, 70, 72, 73, 78-80, and 82-86, and cancel claims 14, 54, 81, and 86-90 without prejudice or disclaimer. Upon entry of this amendment, claims 1, 4-13, 15-41, 44-53, 55-80, and 82-85 will be pending.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). The cited art, alone or in combination, fails to teach or suggest each and every element of the claimed invention. For example, independent claim 1 recites a method comprising, *intra alia*, "providing the participant users with one or more options for declining the conference call, the one or more options identifying alternatives for communication between the subscriber user and the declining participant users" (emphasis added).

*Doganata* discloses a method for providing automatic scheduling and establishment of telephone conferences over a network. Abstract. If the conference is scheduled to dial-out the participants and is marked as a calendar entry, the desktop application stores the conference information in a database. Col 2., line 51-52. A record in this database includes the start/end time of a conference and the telephone numbers of the participants. Col. 2, lines 52-53. Once a teleconference calendar entry is created, the process for establishing the conference starts and proceeds automatically. Col. 2, lines 56-57. At the scheduled time, the desktop application can warn the user by running an alarm function to remind them of the time of the conference. Col. 2, lines 57-61. Thereafter, a secondary application is invoked, either

manually or automatically, and the conference information is passed to the secondary application for automatic establishment of the conference. Col. 2, lines 61-64.

*Doganata* also discloses that the desktop application automatically contacts participants through email informing them of the time of the conference, and users may respond by rejecting the conference. Col. 5, lines 25-29. When a participant rejects the conference, the user establishing the conference is informed, and can opt to conduct the teleconference without the unavailable participant. Col. 5, lines 32-35. Should a participant not answer their phone, the participant's status is displayed to the user. Col. 6, lines 50-52. However, *Doganata* does not disclose or suggest, for example, that participants who indicate that they are unavailable for the conference, or that do not answer their phones, are provided with options identifying alternatives for communicating with the user who set up the conference call. Accordingly, *Doganata* does not teach or suggest "providing the participant users with one or more options for declining the conference call, the one or more options identifying alternatives for communication between the subscriber user and the declining participant users," as recited by independent claim 1 (emphasis added).

*Henrickson* discloses a conference establishment server that coordinates scheduling of a conference call. Abstract. When the time for the conference call approaches, the conference establishment server sends notifications to the conference call participants via email, text message, or other means. ¶ 33. The notification includes an option for participants to confirm availability for the approaching conference. *Id.* If the required confirmations are not received, the conference call requester may be notified of the unavailability of a participant, and may elect to proceed or not proceed

with the conference call. *Id.* However, *Henrickson's* notification does not include, for example, alternatives for declining the conference call, or identifying alternatives for communicating with the conference call requester. Accordingly, *Henrickson* does not teach or suggest "providing the participant users with one or more options for declining the conference call, the one or more options identifying alternatives for communication between the subscriber user and the declining participant users," as recited by independent claim 1 (emphasis added)..

*Malik* discloses a system and method for automated conference call set up. Abstract. In *Malik*, a coordinator first sets up a call by contacting a service node, by, for example, dialing a predetermined telephone number. Col. 5, lines 32-36. The coordinator then enters information about the call, including the time and data of the conference call, and the information is sent to a service control point, where the information is then stored in a database. Col. 5, lines 36-41. The conference call can then be initiated by the service control point by contacting each participant stored in the database. Col. 5, lines 47-49.

*Malik* also discloses that, when participants are not available, the service control point may call an alternate telephone number for the participant. Col. 5, lines 62-64. However, *Malik* does not disclose or suggest, for example, that the participants are provided with an option to decline the conference call by entering the alternate phone number. Accordingly, *Malik* does not teach or suggest "providing the participant users with one or more options for declining the conference call, the one or more options identifying alternatives for communication between the subscriber user and the declining participant users," as recited by independent claim 1 (emphasis added).

*Herr* discloses a conference arrangement wherein, when a conferee is disconnected, a tone alerts the other conferees of the disconnection and the connection is reestablished automatically. Abstract. However, *Herr* does not disclose or suggest, for example, that conferees who decline the conference are provided with alternatives for communicating with other conferees. Accordingly, *Herr* does not teach or suggest "providing the participant users with one or more options for declining the conference call, the one or more options identifying alternatives for communication between the subscriber user and the declining participant users," as recited by independent claim 1 (emphasis added).

*Kermani* discloses an apparatus for allowing a digital search of entries in a digital audio database wherein each audio entry in the database is converted into textual information and the textual information is associated with the particular entry. Abstract. *Kermani* also discloses that the textual information can relate to a voice message. Abstract. However, *Kermani* does not teach or suggest "providing the participant users with one or more options for declining the conference call, the one or more options identifying alternatives for communication between the subscriber user and the declining participant users," as recited by independent claim 1 (emphasis added).

*Chakrabarti* discloses a telecommunication network for making conference calls between mobile and non-mobile telephones wherein, when a disconnection is detected and determined to be unintentional, the connection is automatically reestablished. Abstract. However, *Chakrabarti* does not teach or suggest "providing the participant users with one or more options for declining the conference call, the one or more

options identifying alternatives for communication between the subscriber user and the declining participant users," as recited by independent claim 1 (emphasis added).

*Gottlieb* discloses a conference system that provides dial-out conference calls to participants using a virtual private network ("VPN") dialing plan. However, *Gottlieb* does not teach or suggest "providing the participant users with one or more options for declining the conference call, the one or more options identifying alternatives for communication between the subscriber user and the declining participant users," as recited by independent claim 1 (emphasis added).

Accordingly, the cited art, alone or in combination, fails to teach or suggest each and every element of amended claim 1.

Although different in scope than claim 1 and one another, independent claims 33, 39-41, 73, 79, 80, and 82-85 are patentable over the cited art for at least reasons similar to those discussed above with respect to claim 1. Claims 4-13, 15-32, 34-38, 44-53, 55-72, and 74-78 depend from one of claims 1, 33, 41, and 73, and are allowable due to at least their dependence.

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner enter this Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116. Applicants submit that the proposed amendments would place the application in condition for allowance and do not raise new issues or necessitate the undertaking of any additional search of the art by the Examiner.

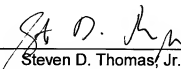
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to Deposit Account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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